

## Executive Workshop Summary

# Developing Bio-based Economy – Contributions and Needs of the Danube Region

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**[...] the EU Strategy for the Danube is an instrument to bring not only countries together but also all these institutions of great importance for our common future.** The river Danube shall connect, not divide. Also is science doing by the common obligation for the humanities. For sure it is a political problem but I think it has to be done on several sides. **Universities and science have a great importance and bio-based economy is the future - because it is life.”**  
*Dr. Erhard Busek, former Austrian Minister of Science and Chairman of the Institute for the Danube and Central Europe (IDM), consultant to EU Commissioner Hahn*

The **Danube Region**, the world’s most international river basin, fully deserves to be **developed in an integrated and coherent manner** to one of the most attractive regions in Europe.

The **Danube River provides people of the Region with key benefits**, such as water supply, food, hydropower, navigation, irrigation, ecosystem services and recreation. However, **the Danube is currently threatened by unsustainable overexploitation, increasing human pressure on its catchment and problems of increased floods and droughts - at least partly induced by climate change.**

Issues to be tackled in developing a bio-based economy within the macro-region Danube Region:

- **Integrated Danube River Basin & Water Resources Research and Management** taking into account long-term development to sustain and improve e.g. ecosystem services like habitats, renewable energy & flood protection, river-type specific hydrological & hydraulic conditions, the continuum of biota & sediment, enhanced e.g. by starting a Danube River Research and Management Project within the EU Danube Strategy.- **Biomass-production as a means of smart specialization holds chances and risks for the Danube Region.** Efficient biomass logistics that exploit economies of scale are key in making the bio-based economy economically competitive. The Danube may develop into an important transportation corridor for feedstock and commodities. Yet assessments that integrate technical, bio-physical and economic considerations are necessary to allow for design of good policies that foresee feedbacks in various parts of our economies.

- **Governance structures & funding schemes** meeting the Danube Region’s needs have to be implemented in the upcoming financing period (Structural Funds, Horizon 2020, etc.), e.g. **similar to the BONUS-Programme** in the Baltic Sea Region

- Strategies for **“smart specialisation” and transnational cooperation, meeting the Danube region’s demands, in higher education, research & innovation** as means to cope with the challenges of our day, e.g. demographic change, digital divide, knowledge & technology transfer, competitiveness as a macro-region in a global world

- **Synergetic effects within and between the Danube Region universities have to be strengthened** via an upgrading of networks such as “Danube Rectors’ Conference” for decision support. Specific thematic problems again have to be decided by networks of e.g. Life Science Universities in order to offer its power in decision supporting policy to boards like the European Commission.

**ICA-CASEE**, a macro-regional network of Life Science Universities in **Central and South Eastern Europe**, is prepared to address these important issues. The significant expertise of the CASEE universities in science and education as well as their profound knowledge of the Danube Region render them premier partners in the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, Europe 2020 Strategy and the development of Horizon 2020.

### Extended Workshop Synthesis:

[https://www.boku.ac.at/fileadmin/\\_H13/Veranstaltungen\\_div\\_infos/WS\\_DRS-BBE\\_18102011.pdf](https://www.boku.ac.at/fileadmin/_H13/Veranstaltungen_div_infos/WS_DRS-BBE_18102011.pdf)

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